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ABSTRACT

Directed especially at graduating college seniors, this paper contains information about employment interviews and how to prepare for them. Subjects discussed include the following: preparing for interviews (analyzing strengths and weaknesses, gathering information about the company); points to remember (dress codes, follow up thank-you letters); types of interviews (informational interviews, practice interviews, campus interviews, preliminary interviews, on-site interviews, and travel expenses for on-site interviews); questions asked by employers, questions to be asked by employment candidates, and illegal questions; interview evaluations; job offers, and resources available at the Indiana State University Career Center. (KC)

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INTERVIEWING GUIDELINES

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The interview represents the culmination of many facets of the job search process. Therefore, it is imperative that you be aware of the importance of the interview, the process involved, and the techniques of presenting yourself in the most effective manner possible. The process does not begin with the interview, but with the preparation. The appropriate preparation is crucial if you are to present your background, talents, interests, and potential in a manner that is convincing to the employer. Interviewing is a selling job and "YOU" are the product.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

ANALYZE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

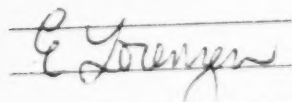
In preparing for interviews, start by doing some solid, honest, self-assessment. Analyze your strengths and weaknesses, your background, your academic performance, your vocational interests, and your personal aspirations and values. In other words, begin to formulate not only what you would like to do, but what you feel you are best prepared to do.

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Some Common Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths

Education
Dependability
Ability to think conceptually
Perseverance
Hands-on experience
Good listening skills
Social poise
Attention to detail
Sincerity
Persuasiveness
Ability to handle pressure
Willingness to work hard
Ability to solve problems
Well-rounded background
Competitiveness
Patience
Independence

Analytical ability
Friendliness
Enthusiasm
Writing skills
Punctuality
Self-motivation
Common sense
Communication skills
Team-building skills
Honesty
Maturity
Ability to relocate
Adaptability
Leadership
Dedication
Assertiveness
Good grades

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Weaknesses

Lack of work experience	Lack of leadership roles
Degree not in area of employment	Lack of college activities
Inability to relocate	Low grades
Negative job experience	Poor communication skills
	Lack of social skills

RESEARCH THE ORGANIZATION

It is important to research the company, industry, organization, or school district prior to the interview. As much information as possible should be acquired about the position for which you are applying. This information will allow you to present your qualifications in the most effective manner and will provide a basis for asking intelligent and insightful questions.

Typical Information to Gather

1. What does the organization do? What are its products or services?
2. What industries or populations are served?
3. What is the size of the organization?
4. How long has the organization been in operation?
5. Does the organization enjoy a good reputation?
6. Where are geographic areas for regional or branch locations?
7. What is the outlook for the organization?
8. What is the name and title of interviewer or decision maker?

For specific research guidelines, please refer to the job search handouts provided in the Career Center Library or consult with the Career Center Librarian.

POINTS TO REMEMBER***DRESS IN GOOD TASTE***

Although most employers are becoming more liberal in standards of dress, basic good taste and grooming should serve as a guide. While the climate of the organization should be considered, it is generally preferable to dress in a conservative manner avoiding trendy styles.

Guidelines for Dress

Women

Quality suit
Clear or lightly tinted nail
polish
Minimal jewelry
Spotless glasses
Understated makeup
Light or no fragrance
Small leather clutch or medium
shoulder bag
Beige, tan or natural stockings
Classic pumps in good repair
Attache or portfolio of good
leather

Men

Quality single breasted suit
Expertly ironed shirt with good collar fit
Conservative tie
Minimal jewelry
Medium to short haircut
Spotless glasses
Calf-length socks
Light or no fragrance
Shoes in good repair
Attache or portfolio of good leather

BE YOURSELF

Your attitude is going to influence the interviewer's evaluation. Emphasize your strong points and remember that the recruiter is looking for inherent personal energy and enthusiasm. Remember the importance of body language such as a firm handshake, posture, and good eye contact.

DWELL ON THE POSITIVE

Always dwell on the positive. While past failures and shortcomings need not be volunteered, don't try to side-step them. Should recruiters ask, try to explain the circumstances in a positive manner, emphasizing what was gained by the experience. Consult your Career Center counselor for help in addressing any problem areas.

ASK QUESTIONS

Ask meaningful questions, particularly if you're not clear about the details of the position, the training program, or other job-related concerns.

FOLLOW UP

Finally, follow up on the interview. Provide credentials, references, or transcripts requested by the prospective employer as soon as possible. Be sure to write down the name, title, and address of the interviewer(s). A brief type written letter of appreciation should follow within 24 hours of the interview.

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

This is not a job interview, but an information gathering session. It provides an opportunity to learn about the field you are considering, including job titles and functions, skill requirements, typical career paths, or information pertaining to a specific organization. Practicing professionals are an excellent source of up-to-date and accurate career information.

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

DO...

- take the initiative to arrange the interview either by phone or in writing.
- research the organization or the career field and have a list of questions prepared.
- research techniques for presenting yourself appropriately in an interviewing situation.
- be appreciative of the time and information shared.

DON'T...

- take more than the scheduled time.
- ask for a job.

THE PRACTICE INTERVIEW

This mock interview provides an opportunity to develop interviewing skills, have your performance critiqued, and receive suggestions for improvement. Forms for requesting a practice interview are available in the Career Center. However, prior to scheduling it is required that you attend an Interviewing Workshop, view an interviewing videotape from the Career Center Library, and/or discuss the topic with a staff member. Preparation, research, and dress should be the same as for other interviewing situations. **PLEASE BRING A BLANK VIDEOTAPE (VHS) SO THAT THE SESSION CAN BE RECORDED.**

THE CAMPUS INTERVIEW

This interview serves as a screening process to determine if a candidate meets the basic qualifications of the organization. It is usually a 30-minute interview taking place in the Career Center. If this meeting is positive, a further in-depth interview may be arranged. You may check with a Career Center counselor for feedback on interview evaluations.

THE PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW

Like the campus interview, the preliminary interview is used to determine a possible match between the candidate and the prospective employer. Qualifications, background, and interests are closely examined. This interview may take place at a mutually agreed upon location or at the actual job site.

HOW THE 30-MINUTE INTERVIEW IS USUALLY SPENT

Welcome and Introduction
Small Talk
Getting Acquainted Questions
Describing the Job
Questions by Interviewer
Interviewee's Questions

THE ON-SITE INTERVIEW

If an employer is interested in pursuing your candidacy, you will be invited to visit the home office, plant, agency, or school district. This visit is the pivotal point in the hiring process. While the interview will be conducted in much the same manner as the preliminary interview, you will meet more people and the length of time will be greater. Therefore, you will be expected to be more conversant about the employer, your background, your academic record, and your career and life goals. Preparation for the interview should include:

- Double check all travel and lodging arrangements before leaving for the interview.
- Review all correspondence and take it with you.
- If the employer does not mention reimbursement, be sure to inquire beforehand to eliminate any misunderstanding. Education majors should note that school districts normally do not pay for travel expenses.

-If you review all the elements of your campus interview, you should be prepared for the home office interview. Some of the essential items you should recall are the following:

- The name of your campus interviewer
- The position for which you are applying
- The duties and responsibilities of the position
- Relevant information from organizational literature, the annual report, and other reference works
- How your qualifications relate to the position and the organization
- Several pertinent questions

-Many of the questions asked in the initial interview may be repeated during the home office interview. You may be asked many times during the day by different interviewers to review your background and explain your interest in your career field and their organization.

-After each individual interview, write down the name of the person(s) with whom you spoke. Make a note of your impressions.

-Most interviews begin at approximately 9:00 a.m. and continue until approximately 5:00 p.m. You can expect little, if any, free time, as even your lunch may be reserved for interviews.

-You will probably meet with your liaison from personnel at the end of your interview schedule. Give your impressions of the day and expect some feedback on your progress.

-Quite often you will be given a quick tour of the organization's facilities to allow you the opportunity to become acquainted with the work environment. If a tour is not included in your schedule and you would like one, inquire at the personnel office. Sometimes, you may be given a tour of the community.

-Some employers administer tests - psychological, aptitude, etc. - during your visit. These may last from a half hour to three hours. This is becoming less common, however. The topic of drug testing may be discussed.

-Do not plan on receiving an offer at the end of the interview. If you do get a verbal offer or the employer implies that an offer is likely, you may expect a written offer within two to four weeks.

-If you are still interested in the job at the end of the interview, express your interest to your personnel liaison and state that you are hoping for a favorable reply. When you return home, follow up with a letter expressing your interest in the position and your appreciation for their time and consideration.

TYPICAL AGENDA FOR FACILITY VISIT

- Breakfast meeting with host
- Brief interview with high-level management
- Facility tour
- Luncheon
- Afternoon meeting with supervisors
- Final meeting with decision maker
- Community tour

Travel Expenses for the On-site Interview

Reimbursement policies for travel expenses for on-site interviews vary greatly. **Some employers reimburse completely, others only partially, while some will not reimburse for any of the expenses incurred.** Therefore, it is important for you to be aware of the employer's policy before committing to a visit. In most cases, you will be advised in writing as to what expenses will be covered. However, if no reference is made to travel expense, it is appropriate to inquire.

If expenses are covered by the employer, you should be aware of the following concerns:

Receipts - Hotel, food, and travel receipts will normally be required prior to reimbursement. Keep all original receipts because some organizations will not accept credit card receipts.

Transportation - You may select the most convenient and economical means of public transportation, either tourist class air or first class rail. If you travel by automobile, indicate your route and mileage.

Meals - While prices will vary, those listed below are usually considered to be appropriate.

Breakfast.....	\$5.00
Lunch.....	\$10.00
Dinner.....	\$20.00

Local Transportation - This includes airport limousine service, buses, local or suburban trains, and taxis.

Baggage - Service tips cover transfer of baggage at airport, hotel, or other travel center.

General Information - Be prudent! Major organizations have learned the normal cost of travel expenses through daily experience. An exaggerated expense report can negatively affect your candidacy.

The following items are NOT normally considered travel expenses:

- Entertainment, tours, cigarettes, magazines, alcohol.
- Travel insurance, excessive tips (should not exceed 20% of food bill).
- Personal phone calls, except in emergencies or for recruitment business.
- Hotel stopovers at points other than the city being visited, except as may be required by the transportation schedule.
- Expenses for persons other than the individual invited on planned visit, except where the company authorized expenses for the applicant's spouse.

THE INTERVIEW

There are no absolutes in describing an interview situation. Many factors account for what takes place. The personality of the interviewer, the needs of the employer, and the formality of the setting all affect the style and pace of the interview. While you cannot be told exactly what to expect in every situation, you can become aware of those questions typically asked by employers, those which should be asked by candidates, and those which are illegal in nature. The following questions are meant to serve as guidelines.

QUESTIONS ASKED BY EMPLOYERS

1. Tell me a little about yourself.
2. Why did you attend Indiana State University?
3. What led you to choose your major or career field?
4. What college subjects did you like best? Why?
5. What college subjects did you like least? Why?
6. Do you think that your grades are a good indication of your academic abilities?
7. What are your plans for continued or graduate study?
8. Describe your most rewarding college experience.
9. Tell me about your extracurricular activities and interests.
10. How has your college experience prepared you for a business career?
11. How would you describe yourself?
12. What did you learn or gain from your part-time and summer job experiences?
13. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?
14. What accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
15. What do you really want to do in life?
16. What are your long-range career objectives? How do you plan to achieve these?
17. What are the most important rewards you expect in your business career?
18. Which is more important to you, the money or type of job?
19. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
20. Why should I hire you?
21. What qualifications do you have that make you think that you will be successful in business?
22. Why did you select to interview with our company?
23. What do you know about our company?
24. What do you think it takes to be successful in a company like ours?
25. In what way do you think you can contribute to our company?
26. In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
27. How would you describe the ideal job for you?
28. What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
29. Would you prefer on-the-job training or a formal program?
30. Are you seeking employment in a company of a certain size? Why?
31. Do you have a geographical preference? Why?
32. Will you relocate? Does relocation bother you?
33. Are you willing to travel?
34. Are you willing to spend at least six months as a trainee?
35. Why do you think you might like to live in the community in which our company is located?
36. How do you spend your spare time?
37. What major problem have you encountered and how did you deal with it?
38. What have you learned from your mistakes?

Questions Often Asked in the Education Interview

1. Tell me about yourself and your personal goals.
2. Why do you want to teach?
3. Why did you select your major field?
4. Why do you want to teach in this school district?
5. What do you know about our district and schools?
6. How would you describe your student teaching experience?
7. How would you describe your working relationships with supervisors and other teachers during student teaching?
8. What other experiences have you had working with young people?
9. In what grade levels or subjects are you most interested?
10. With what type of classroom organization are you most comfortable?
11. What personal qualities do you have to offer your classroom situation?
12. What will be your most difficult task concerning teaching? Why?
13. How might you provide for individual differences within the classroom?
14. What are some current trends, methods, and resources in your field?
15. What new or creative approaches would you use in your classes?
16. How can you bring "career orientation" into your classes?
17. What is your position on discipline in your classroom?
18. What rules would you have for your classroom?
19. If a student said you were unfair, what would you do?
20. What extracurricular activities do you feel qualified to sponsor?
21. What have you learned from participation in extracurricular activities?
22. What can you offer your school and community outside the classroom?
23. How effective do you expect to be as a teacher?
24. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about yourself?
25. Do you have any questions?

Topics Often Discussed

1. A student teaching experience
2. A rewarding experience in working with students
3. Participation in college activities
4. Previous classroom experience
5. Subject you feel comfortable in teaching
6. Lesson planning
7. Materials and equipment with which you like to work
8. Area of specialization
9. Classroom management
10. Discipline
11. Teaching techniques
12. Professional attitude
13. Extracurricular involvement
14. Staff relationships
15. Salary and economic benefits

Illegal Pre-employment Topics

1. Marital status and social or living arrangements
2. Spouse's profession
3. Race, religion, or national origin
4. Age
5. Financial information
6. Arrests
7. Height and weight
8. Pregnancy status and childbearing plans
9. Number and ages of children or day-care provisions
10. Foreign citizenship
11. Academic degrees if not required for the position
12. Military service discharge information
13. Social activities as related to social clubs, religious groups, or other non-job related organizations
14. Disabilities

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Office of Civil Rights of the Department of Education serve to ensure compliance with federal acts governing employment opportunities.

QUESTIONS ASKED BY CANDIDATES

Job Interviews

1. What are the opportunities for personal growth?
2. Describe typical first year assignments.
3. Tell me about your training programs.
4. Identify typical career paths. What is a realistic time frame for advancement?
5. Is it company policy to promote from within?
6. How is an employee evaluated and promoted?
7. What type of career opportunities are available for someone with my degree and skills?
8. Describe the work environment.
9. How would you describe your company's personality and management style?
10. Why do you enjoy working for your company?
11. When do you expect to make a hiring decision (if not indicated by the employer)?

Informational Interviews

Questions About the Job Function

1. Tell me about your job.
2. How do you spend a typical day? What kinds of activities do you get involved in?
3. How does this position fit into the organization?
4. What do you find most tedious about your job?
5. What kinds of people do you interact with?
6. What parts of your job are the most challenging?
7. What attributes and skills are necessary for a person in your position? What training have you had that you would consider important for this job?
8. How has the nature of your job changed?
9. What professional in the field do you admire most and why?

Questions About the Organization

1. What is the overall philosophy of management in this organization? How is that implemented?
2. How are new developments perceived?
3. What are the long-range goals of the organization? Short-range goals?
4. How are goals set and measured? Formally or informally? How often?
5. What has been the major achievement of this organization in the field?
6. What particular skills and abilities do you look for to help you increase your effectiveness?
7. Is there in-house training? Continuing management development?
8. What are the trends/projections you see for this organization?

Questions About the Field

1. What do you see the growth potential in your field to be over the next 5 years?
2. What are the positive or innovative trends in the field?
3. With whom else do you recommend I speak?
4. What journals or magazines should I be reading?
5. What professional associations might be appropriate for me to join?

INTERVIEW EVALUATIONS

Even though you follow the steps outlined in this publication and review additional resource materials, you should be prepared for the fact that you will not interview equally well with all employers. Each organization has well-defined criteria and standards for evaluating candidates. While these standards may vary greatly from organization to organization, the following are qualities frequently considered by employers when hiring or rejecting a candidate.

Predictors of Success

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| -Ambition and motivation | -Job "fits" |
| -Grades | -Specific courses |
| -Related work experience | -Adaptability |
| -Creativity and intelligence | -Leadership ability |
| -Teamwork capabilities | -Ability to communicate |
| -Initiative | -Work habits |
| -Good personality | |

Knockout Factors

- Lack of proper career planning--purposes and goals ill defined
- Lack of knowledge in field of specialization--not well qualified
- Inability to express oneself clearly
- Not prepared for the interview--no research on organization
- No real interest in the organization or the industry--merely shopping around
- Narrow location interest--unwilling to relocate
- Little interest and enthusiasm--indifferent
- Overbearing--overaggressive--conceited
- Interest only in best dollar offer
- Asks poor questions about the job
- Makes excuses--evasive--hedges on unfavorable factors in record
- No confidence and poise--fails to maintain good eye contact
- Poor personal appearance

JOB OFFERS

If a job offer is made, it is appropriate to discuss with the employer a time frame in which the offer will be accepted or declined.

Following the interview, if you have not heard from the employer within a 2 to 3 week period, it is appropriate to call and restate your interest and inquire as to your candidate status.

RESOURCES

If you are to be employed, INTERVIEWS ARE INEVITABLE! So, make sure you gain a good understanding of the process involved, the preparation necessary, and the expectations of most prospective employers in an interviewing situation.

The Career Center provides the following resources:

Career Center Library

houses books, articles, and video tapes to enhance interviewing skill development.

Interviewing Workshops

sessions are scheduled throughout the academic year to present, discuss, and answer questions concerning interviewing techniques.

Practice Interviews

an opportunity to experience an interview situation and receive constructive feedback.

Etiquette Dinners

an opportunity to learn appropriate etiquette for business and social dining.

Developing Your Professional Image

a special program, scheduled early in the fall semester, which presents professional fashions and accessories and discusses aspects of professional grooming.

BE YOUR BEST!